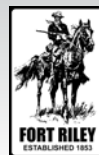




In Step on Channel 2

6:30 a.m. In Step
8 a.m. In Step
Noon In Step
6 p.m. In Step
10 p.m. In Step

Fort Riley Community



March 14, 2003

America's Warfighting Center

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Lodging staff dedicated to ensuring guest's comfort

By Emily O'Connor
Staff Writer

If you have ever traveled with the military, whether it was PCS travel, TDY travel or simply leisure travel, you know that Army Lodging is your home away from home.

Fort Riley's Army Lodging consists of 157 rooms in 11 buildings. However, as a result of the recent National Guard and Reserve mobilizations through Fort Riley, 67 of the available rooms in two of the buildings are currently being used by another organization, according to James Van Zlike, Fort Riley's Army Lodging manager.

"Our mission is to provide temporary housing for official travelers on Fort Riley," Van Zlike said. "Most of these people are on TDY or are PCSing. However, we do offer housing for retirees, DoD cardholders or anyone with a valid military ID card, on a space-available basis."

During the peak season, which is generally March through September, unofficial travelers cannot make reservations for rooms, but can show up the night they wish to seek housing and get that distributed on a first come, first served basis.

In the off peak season, from September to February, unofficial travelers have the opportunity to make reservations, just as the official travelers do year-round. However, if Army Lodging is full and an official traveler comes in for a room, an unofficial traveler might be bumped.

"There are lots of features that are unique to Fort Riley," Van Zlike said. "Our location on historic Main Post is nice, while the historic nature of our facilities and the configuration of the rooms are kind of special, too, especially when compared to many other Army posts."

When you walk into the Army Lodging office, Carr Hall, building 45, you will be greeted by someone like Melis-

sa Sions, billeting and support systems/front desk supervisor.

"I do scheduling at the front desk, manage front desk operations and manage the front desk staff for 24-hour operations," Sions said. "I strive to make a guest's stay as comfortable as possible."

Upon first entering any Fort Riley Army Lodging guest room, the first thing you will notice is that the rooms are spacious, tastefully decorated and spotlessly clean. People like Frances Bryant, Fort Riley lodging housekeeper, see to it that all of the rooms with Army Lodging are in tip-top shape and comfortable for the guests.

Bryant, who has worked with Fort Riley's Army Lodging operations for about 10 years, cares for the rooms in Waters Hall, building 170.

"The history behind this old building is interesting," said Bryant as she took a break from cleaning one of the rooms. "A lot of people have said that it's haunted, but the ghost must love me because I've never seen him."

Bryant, whose husband retired at Fort Riley in 1989, says that she enjoys her job because it gives her something to do, other than sitting idly at home.

"I enjoy the hours I work and the opportunity to meet lots of different people," Bryant said.

One couple that stands out in her mind, among the guests over the years, is a couple who stayed in lodging for several months.

"This couple was building a house in Milford and stayed here for about two months," Bryant said. "They had a parrot that talked and sang. First thing each morning, I went to see the parrot."

She still speaks to the parrot's owners from time to time.

Bryant added that many people didn't know that Waters Hall was Army Lodging, but thought that it was a Bachelor's Officers Quarters, instead.

Bryant said she truly enjoys her job.

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Sgt. Charles Sisson, 977th Military Police Company, extends his lodging at the Fort Riley Army Lodging office. Fort Riley's Army Lodging consists of 157 rooms in 11 buildings.



Nicole Aulk, housekeeper, cleans rooms at Grimes Hall.

Post Bites

Post Bites

Free classes, scholarships available to family members

By Kim Levine
Staff Writer

Being a military family member has its perks. Christine Terry, a part-time contract employee in the Fort Riley Learning Center and a military spouse, said she has been taking classes at no cost to her at Fort Riley University since June, and has almost completed her associate's degree.

Terry said she is an avid supporter of the Leadership Skill Enhancement Courses offered at Fort Riley University through Barton County Community College. The LSEC program consists of approximately 42 undergraduate courses that can be applied toward an associate's degree or meet prerequisites for a bachelor's degree. Marian Moore, chief of pro-

grams, Army Education Center, said the majority of the courses transfer directly to other colleges and universities. LSEC courses are available to all Department of Defense identification card holders at no cost to the students, and Terry said the program even provides the books used in the courses. She said she tries to encourage everyone to take advantage of LSEC.

"As a family member, the classes give you something to do, and parents get a chance to get away from the kids," said Terry. "Virtually, the only cost is the babysitter."

LSEC offers a variety of courses, including business and management, computer skills, math, history and sciences. The facilities are user-friendly and the classes are filled with a wide range of students, Terry said. Students vary in age,

rank and previous school experience.

Even with the non-traditional students and the wide make-up of the classes, Moore said the staff and teachers are ready to lend a hand to the students when needed.

"There is a good staff that can accommodate and relate to the adult or working student," said Moore. "Even high school students have no problem acclimating."

Moore explained that high school seniors can use the program, with written approval from their high school counselors, to get a head start on college core classes, since they can take classes in the summer. LSEC offers seven six-week cycles throughout the year, including a summer cycle. The program also offers courses during the lunch hour. Active duty military have early enrollment

options two weeks prior to dependents and civilians, but if courses do fill up, Moore said she urges people to sign up on the standby list.

Enrollment for LSEC begins in the Learning Centers, where the students speak with an education counselor about their educational goals, said Moore. The counselors will assess the students and make recommendations based on their individual needs.

However, the LSEC program is not the only opportunity family members have to further their education. Several scholarships are available specifically for dependents and family members.

"There are opportunities for scholarships, grants, loans and the whole spectrum," said Kari Torkelson, senior counselor, Junction City High School.

The Fort Riley Combined Scholarship Committee awards several scholarships each year to family members in the Fort Riley Community. Scholarships are available for undergraduate college programs and vocational schooling. Last year, nine people were awarded a total of \$14,000 through the Combined Scholarship program, and this year, the committee hopes to match or exceed this amount, said Dee Hayhurst, committee chairperson.

"I know when my husband joined the Army 20 years ago, it was a scholarship like this that got me back to school," said Hayhurst. "It is why I do this, and my greatest pleasure!"

Applications for the Combined Scholarships are available at local high

See Scholarships Page 10

Life in the Army: The Army family supports troops in many ways

By Jamie Bender
Staff writer

Whether you are a soldier just entering the Army, a soldier who is retiring after 20 years of service, a single soldier or a married soldier with or without children, you are part of the Army family.

"The Army takes care of its own" is a phrase that is heard often among soldiers. One of the ways soldiers take care of soldiers is through Army Emergency Relief.

The mission of AER is to provide emergency financial assistance to soldiers.

"Soldiers donate money to AER to help their fellow soldiers in crisis," said Kaye Moseley, financial readiness program coordinator. "We help with emergency situations that arise suddenly. Things like emergency leave or an interruption of pay that causes hardship for a soldier and they can't pay for essentials like rent, food or utilities. We also help with funeral expenses for immediate family members."

There is no federal funding for AER. The money comes from voluntary contributions from

active and retired soldiers.

Moseley said that she feels AER is the epitome of soldiers helping soldiers. "It's a very organized way of passing the hat," she said. "It's a very unique and wonderful service for soldiers from soldiers. It is available for all active duty members and their families, as well as retired members and their families. It's one of those things you retain eligibility for even after you retire."

Established in 1942, the organization holds a fund-raising campaign every year. The campaign is for more than just raising money.

"While we want to raise funds to continue financial support for the AER program, we also want to ensure that every soldier is contacted and receives information about AER services," said Moseley. "We want them to remember AER and use it as their first choice in a crisis situation."

The money a soldier receives from AER is an interest free loan or a grant.

"Typically, the soldiers want to pay the money back for the next soldier to use," said Moseley. "If, at no fault of their own, the soldier has a financial hardship on a long

term basis, we can provide a grant. We can also delay the pay-

if they are close to a military



Graphic Illustration/Watson

ment for up to six months to give the soldier time to improve their situation.

With so many soldiers being deployed, many military families decide to move home to during the separation. AER is available to provide assistance wherever you are.

"We have services 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Moseley. "Through our office or a number of others, they can get AER assistance regardless of where they are in the United States. If a family needs service,

they can contact a local aid station

if they are close to a military

help soldiers and their families develop skills that help them meet the demands of being a soldier or military family.

The mission of ASC is to ensure soldier and family readiness," said Bill Powers, chief, Soldier and Family Support Center. "We want to build a resilient, self-reliant, problem-solving, goal oriented family."

ACS offers numerous programs that help soldiers and their families with everything from financial management to volunteer programs.

"If a soldier is having financial problems, that could be a deterrent to mission readiness," said Powers. "We have a program to help with that. We have a program for spouses seeking employment, which can also help with financial difficulties. We provide volunteer opportunities to give family members a sense of contribution to the mission and to reinforce their own self worth. We don't create that sense; we reinforce it."

The possibility of a wartime situation provides unique challenges for the staff of ACS, said Powers.

ACS can also receive help at one of the programs located at the SFSC that are part of Army Community Service. ACS provides programs and services designed to

"Our staff is prepared for it," he said. "The Fort Riley community can be very proud of the ACS staff that is here to support them. Some of our staff are active duty family members. They understand very clearly the challenges families face."

"We (at SFSC) provide mobilization and deployment support to families in a timely manner," said Elizabeth Gahner, FRG leader, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry. "We are a resource for the families. We are there to send them in the right direction and help them become self-reliant."

The FRG helps the families of deployed soldiers by quelling the rumor mill, said Gahner. "We have a phone tree set up so we can send out information as it comes



Students learn about patriotism, tie ribbons in support of troops

By Michael Watson
Staff writer

Elementary school students know the Pledge of Allegiance, but Lt. Col. (ret.) Buz Bruzina said it would be a few years before they fully understand its meaning.

However, students at Morris Hill Elementary took one step closer to understanding that meaning on March 6, as they showed support for the 70th Engineer Battalion, the school's sponsor, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The students and soldiers from the 70th Eng. Bn. tied yellow ribbons to trees and fencing on the school's front lawn.

At a ceremony to honor the battalion, Bruzina asked how many of the children have the opportunity to use a computer at school or home, and nearly 215 hands flew to the air — one for every student in attendance. He

said the students are lucky to have the chance to earn such a wonderful education, because it has not always been that easy.

"We are in a country that is wealthy, and we have to protect our country and the opportunity to use the computer," Bruzina said. "Sometimes, that means we have to go to war."

He said the United States is vulnerable right now to things that Americans do not want to happen — terrorism. But if it comes to war, Fort Riley soldiers are prepared to do what they have to do to protect the nation.

In addition to tying approximately 215 yellow ribbons to fixtures on the school's front lawn, the children also had the opportunity to shake hands and swap stories with about 60 soldiers who were present for the event.

Soldiers like Sgt. Trinidad Gutierrez said that meant a lot to him.

"I saw a lot of reminders of my son today," he said. "My family

can't make it here for my deployment, so seeing these children and the support they have given us means a lot to me. Hopefully, my son will get the chance to do the same thing for troops back home in Washington State."

None of the soldiers had children attending the school, but on the day of the ceremony, the whole battalion was like family, fourth grader Jonathan Alvarez, 10, said.

His dad Sgt. Anthony Alvarez, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry, deployed on March 3, and this ceremony helped Jonathan understand that many soldiers took an oath to protect their nation, he said. Even when that meant the soldiers would leave their families to complete the mission.

"When my dad told me he was leaving, I was kind of mad, because we didn't know where he was going or how long he would be gone," he said. "But I understand why he is gone, and I am very proud of what he is doing."

After the ceremony was over, it was back to the playground — to be a child again. But the fence banner that reads "God Bless America."



Photo: Biles

Morris Hill Elementary students visit with soldiers from the 70th Engineer Battalion.

Lodging continued from page 9

"I just enjoy doing this job because it gives people a nice, clean place to stay when they're traveling," she said. "They can feel at home here."

Another group of people who come to ensure that the Army Lodging guest rooms are operational and comfortable is the maintenance workers.

Norman Enfield, Army Lodging maintenance worker, has worked with Fort Riley's Army Lodging for a total of seven years.

"I assess what needs to be done

in our buildings and then put in service orders to the contracted maintenance folks," Enfield said.

"The work that we do on our own here includes maintaining the 25-inch television sets, telephones and the furniture in our rooms. We also take care of the lawns and snow removal when needed."

Anytime that it snows and the accumulation is more than two inches, Enfield and his crew arrive at work early in the morning to clean away the snow.

"We normally come in from

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day," Enfield said. "But on the days that it snows, we come in at 6 a.m. to get started."

Enfield, like Bryant, enjoys his job.

"I like working here because I get to work outside and I'm not stuck in the same place all of the time," he said. "There's something new going on everyday."

Keeping the guest rooms comfortable and functional is a goal that all Army Lodging employees strive to achieve, Van Zike said.

VIP nominations being accepted

DeCA Release

The National Military Family Association has kicked off its 2003 Very Important Patriot Program. VIP recognizes exceptional volunteers worldwide whose outstanding service contributes to improving the quality of life in military and/or local civilian communities.

The VIP Program recognizes fifteen exceptional volunteers: five Very Important Patriots, five Awards of Honor and five Awards of Merit. Active duty, National Guard, Reserve and retired members of the seven uniformed services and their family members and survivors are eligible to receive the award.

Each military family center may submit six

nominations from their installation; each guard or reserve unit may submit one nomination through their family readiness office; each donating spouse club may submit one nomination and each NMFA installation representative or representative team may submit one nomination. The NMFA representatives for Fort Riley are Arlene Nordstrom and Theresa Donahoe. Nominations are only accepted through the NMFA web site and are due at NMFA headquarters not later than April 24. Information about the program is available on the website as well as procedures for nominating a candidate.

Any questions or comments can be e-mailed to Donna Clodfelter, vip@nmfa.org or at (703) 931-6632.

Life in the Army continued from page 9

in. We just (recently) put out the address of our soldiers to their families."

FRG hold meetings regularly, not only put out information about the deployed spouses, but also about how to cope while their gone.

"We meet monthly and discuss issues that affect us all," said Gahner. "We have the financial non-commissioned officer come and talk about money issues. We also have someone from Operational Security coming to talk to us about what you should and shouldn't say to the grocery store clerk and things like that."

The FRG is also an opportunity to socialize with others in the same situation.

"In the next few months [after their spouses are deployed], people will start getting antsy, and that's when we will have our potluck dinners," said Gahner. "Sometimes, when your spouse is gone, you find yourself eating the same thing over and over. The potlucks are a nice chance to eat something different. We are planning on having everyone bring the recipe for their dish."

The FRG also supports spouses of deployed soldiers by putting them in touch with other spouses in the same situation.

"Sometimes, after the kids are in bed, that's the time when we need someone to talk to," said Gahner. "You are strong for your family all day, and then at night

people are sad and lonely. That's when you can pick up the phone and call someone who is going through the same thing. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone whose husband is with your husband."

Even when a soldier is not deployed, the FRG can be a great resource for anyone in the Army family.

"The FRG is there to help," said Gahner. "We are not just a group of women who complain and gossip. It is a great way to meet new friends if you are new to the post."

"I really like FRG. It's nice to feel like you know what is going on," said Adrienne Bjorkman. "It helps you to get familiar with

Army terms and get to know people that you can ask questions."

"The FRG has been a savior to me," said Patti King. "I am very involved in it and it keeps my mind occupied when my husband is out there [for deployment or training]. It is a great support group."

Gahner has confidence that her Army family will be there for her

when she needs them.

"The day my husband left [for a deployment], my neighbor came and swept the snow off my porch," said Gahner. "The other day another neighbor came and put a big yellow bow on my door and left some candy. They just wanted to let me know they were thinking about me. It's been my experience that Army communi-

ties come together to help and support those whose spouses are deployed."

Editor's Note: This is the final article in a series of four on Life in the Army. All four articles can be found online in the Fort Riley Post archive, <http://www.riley.army.mil/news/paper/Archive/index.htm>

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schools, the Fort Riley Thrift Shop, The Shoppe, Library, the Education Center or the Soldier and Family Support Center. Applications are due April 8, and scholarships will be awarded in May.

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, Fort Riley Chapter, also sponsors a scholarship for military family members. A scholarship of \$1,000 is awarded each year to a new recipient. Applications are available at local high schools, and the deadline is March 31.

Other scholarships include the Scholarship for Military Children, awarded by local commissaries, the Armed Services YMCA Scholarships and scholarships sponsored by the Military Officers Association of America. All of these scholarships can be found on-line, and Torkelson said a resourceful website is www.fastweb.com. To find the several scholarships sponsored by MOAA, visit www.moaa.org/edu-

cation/ or to find information and details on other scholarships, search the Army website at www.army.mil or www.military.com/careers/education/scholarshipssearch/

"Military dependents are lucky, because there are scholarships available that are just for military dependents," said Torkelson.

"They have added incentives or perks."

Yet, Torkelson said that not as many students apply for the scholarships as she would like.

"We can provide the pre-materials, the applications and the websites," said Torkelson, "but it's the student's job to fill them out."

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Fort Riley Sports

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America's Warfighting Center

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Instructor Edie Hall helps get children acclimated to the water before they jump in for their swimming lessons Tuesday evening at Eyster Pool. Lessons are held regularly. For more information, call 239-9441.

Basketball Standings as of March 10

Wins-Losses

Southern League

HHC, 270 Armor	12-0
HHC, 24 ID	11-2
977 MP Company	9-2
HHC, 1-16 INF	8-3
MEDDAC	8-4
Echo Det, 15th PSB	8-5
HHC, 1st BDE	7-6
568 CSE	6-7
USAG, 24 ID	4-8
331 Signal	4-9
C, 4-3 ADA	3-7
82nd Medical Det.	3-10
1st Finance Battalion	1-10
300th MP Company	1-12

Western League

HHC, 1-34 Armor	12-1
A, 2-34 Armor	10-1
B, 1-5 FA	8-4
A, 1st EN	7-2
HHC, 1st EN	6-4
A, 1-34 Armor	6-7
D, 1-5 FA	5-5
D, TRP 4th CAV	5-6
C, 2-34 Armor	5-7
SVC, 1-5 FA	5-7
A, 1/161 FA	4-8
B, 1st EN	4-8
HHC, 1-5 FA	4-9
C, 1-34 Armor	1-12

Eastern League

C, 4-1 FA	9-2
A, 70 EN	8-2
HHC, 1-13 Armor	7-2
HHC, 4-1 FA	6-2
A, 1-13 Armor	6-3
696 Signal	5-2
1st Maint. Co.	4-4
24th Trans.	3-5
B, 4-1 FA	3-6
A, 4-1 FA	2-7
C, 1-4 ADA	1-7
172nd Chem.	1-8
C, 70 EN	1-10

Spring turkey permit applications due soon

The DES Conservation Division is currently accepting applications through March 24 for the 2003 Spring Turkey Lottery Drawing. Applications are available at the Outdoor Recreation Center, building 9011 and the DES, Conservation Division, building 1020. The lottery drawing will occur on March 27. A total of 180 permits are available, which will be split into two segments, April 9-30 and May 1-18.

Additionally, Fort Riley will have a youth season, April 4-6. The youth season is unlimited in participation (no drawing) for eligible hunters. Persons hunting the youth season are also eligible to apply for the regular season.

For further information, contact the Conservation Division at 239-6211 or visit the website at <http://www.riley.army.mil/Recreation/Outdoor/Hunting>

Wildcats gather for NCAA Watch Party

K-State Sports Information

MANHATTAN, Kan. - For the second-straight year, the 7th-ranked Kansas State women's basketball team will host a NCAA Watch Party.

Wildcat fans are invited to join the team a 3 p.m., Sunday in Bramlage Coliseum to find out who the 'Cats will host in the NCAA first- and second-rounds March 23 and 25.

The watch party is free to the public, with doors opening at 3 p.m. Players and coaches will be available to sign autographs between 3 and 3:30 p.m. on the West concourse.

Following the autograph session, fans will move inside the arena to prepare to watch the selection show and the announcement of the bracket.

The K-State Pep Band, spirit groups and Willie the Wildcat will also be on hand. Player cards and NCAA t-shirts will be given away, and special prize drawings will take place leading up to the selection show.

Head coach Deb Patterson and the Wildcats will address their fans and junior Nicole Ohlde and sophomores Kendra Wecker and Megan Mahoney will be recognized as Big 12 honorees prior to

broadcast.

Blank brackets will be available for fans who want to fill in the pairings as they are announced on the show, which will be aired by ESPN beginning at 4 p.m.

Fans should park on the West side of the arena, with only the West-side gates being open that day.

The Kansas State ticket office will be open throughout the event. Fans will have an opportunity to purchase all-session tickets. Chairback seating for the tournament is already sold out.

All-session reserved bench seating is available at \$18 for adults and \$10 for K-State students and youth. All-session tickets are good for admission to all three games of the event. Fans are encouraged to purchase all-session tickets to ensure their seating because, by NCAA policy, individual-session tickets cannot go on sale until the day tournament play begins.

Wildcat center, Nicole Ohlde, takes the ball to the board for two points during the 115 - 37 rout of Arkansas-Pine Bluff in December. The 'Cats are hosting an NCAA Watch Party Sunday at Bramlage Coliseum.



Post-Biles

Moles, gophers can cause destruction, be beneficial as well

By Alan Hynec

DES Biologist

Many lawns and mowed areas on Fort Riley show signs similar to small battlefields. Small mounds of bare soil seem to appear out of nowhere. Craters erupt as if a miniature army has passed through the area, complete with mortar impacts and demolition zones. Raised tunnels appear overnight as if an advancing enemy is in the midst. What could cause all of this destruction? The answer is moles and gophers.

Although both culprits can cause damage to the landscape, they are also two very different mammals.

The eastern mole is a member of the shrew family, who are mainly insectivores. Moles can be found in loose soils in search of earthworms and other invertebrates. Like other members of its family, moles have a voracious appetite. They can eat up to one-half of their body weight each day. Moles burrow year around, making tunnels near the ground surface at a pace as fast as one foot per minute.

Pocket gophers are members of the rodent family and cause more disturbance than moles. There are two species of gophers in Kansas. The plains pocket gopher can be found nearly statewide, but is apparently absent from the extreme southeast corner of Kansas. It prefers sandy to loamy soils and is mainly found in bottomland habitat. The yellow-faced pocket gopher is only found in the southwestern part of the state. It inhabits areas of heavy, clay soil in both upland and bottomland situations.

The plains pocket gopher is more highly specialized for digging than any other North American mammal and lives underground for its entire life. Gophers are well equipped, for their underground lifestyle, with powerfully built legs. Their large claws and highly sensitive whiskers help them maneuver in the dark. An unusual adaptation is the gopher's lips, which can be closed behind the four incisor teeth to keep dirt out of its mouth when using its teeth for digging.

Pocket gophers live in a burrow system that can cover an area

up to 2,000 square feet. The burrows are about three inches in diameter and usually six to 12 inches below ground. However, some nesting and food storage chambers may be as deep as six feet below ground. As evidenced by all of the recent activity on Fort Riley, pocket gophers do not hibernate and stay active all year long.

Pocket gophers often invade yards and feed on various garden crops and ornamental plants. A single gopher moving down a garden row can inflict serious damage in a very short time. Besides plants, gophers can gnaw and damage plastic water lines and lawn sprinkler systems. Their tunnels can divert and carry off irrigation water and lead to soil erosion. Additionally, mounds of soil on lawns can interfere with mowing equipment.

Gophers and moles can cause significant damage to lawns and golf courses and are often scorned by landowners and greens keepers; however, their importance in maintaining a healthy prairie ecosystem is paramount. The tunnels they dig serve to aerate the

soil and hold additional moisture. The churning action of the soil helps improve organic matter and increases fertility. Disturbed areas are temporarily converted to

sparse vegetation covered with annual plants. These subtle changes help to increase diversity within the tallgrass prairie.

For more information on this or

other natural resources topics, stop by the Conservation Division, building 1020, or visit www.riley.army.mil/Services/Fort/Environment/NatResources



DES Photo

Gophers and moles can cause significant damage to lawns and golf courses and are often scorned by landowners and greens keepers.



Rally Point offers variety of activities; fun for families, singles

By Kim Levine
Staff Writer

Rally Point, located on Trooper Drive, offers a variety of entertainment to fit the needs of the entire Fort Riley community. Rally Point serves as a nightclub, sports bar, restaurant, special events facility and movie theater. With several different programs and themed nights, the facility offers entertainment for singles, couples, families and children.

Rally Point is home to several different special events throughout the year, but has weekly entertainment as well. Every Wednesday night is Karaoke Night at Rally Point. The kitchen serves 10-cent wings from 5 - 9 p.m., and an in-house disc jockey starts karaoke at 8 p.m. The DJ offers a variety of songs to sing, from oldies to country and pop. Mike Steffens, general manager of Rally Point, said an average of 150 people join in the fun on Karaoke Night.

"It's the mid-week party night," said Steffens. Friday nights at Rally Point take a different approach. The facility offers Friday Family Night from 5 - 8 p.m. For \$5.95 for adults and \$3.95 for children 10 and under, families can enjoy a pizza buffet, salad bar, drinks and a movie. The buffet begins at 5 p.m., and a family-oriented movie starts at 6 p.m. After the movie, the dance floor is open for children and parents to dance together in Rally Point's dance party for kids, said Steffens. The music leads families in dances like the "chicken-dance" and the "hokey-pokey."

"There is no other place on Fort Riley where families can go to dance and have a good time together," said Steffens. "It is an atmosphere where the parents and the kids have fun."

But the fun does not end there. Every Saturday, Rally Point is home to Troopers Night. This late-night, hip-hop dance club opens at 5 p.m. and goes until 4 a.m. Chris Monroe, the DJ for the night, starts the dance music at 11 p.m. Steffens said Rally Point has the largest dance floor in Kansas, and Saturday nights bring in about 600 people. A \$5 entrance fee is charged at the door. Steffens said a good age-range, from 18-40 years old, and wide mix of people enjoy the late night. Rally Point also has security staff for the night to make sure everything stays under control.

Take care of your pets, like you would your family, before deploying

By Michael Watson
Staff writer

When soldiers deploy, pets should be included in family planning. But that is not always the case, said Pearl Speer, Army Community Service family programs manager. "We live out in the country, and every time there is a deployment, there are dogs running around — they just get dumped out in the country," she said. Speer said that is not the answer. Alternative plans need to be made so proper care is given if families feel they cannot take care of their pets.

When Veterinary Services hears that a pet has been neglected, it looks for several things. Does the pet have water and adequate shelter from winter weather? Is the pet abnormally aggressive? These are signs that pets are not being taken care of properly, said Capt. Michael Hansen, Veterinary Services. During deployments, the number of calls about neglected pets is especially high, he said. Not only are they neglected, but the number of stray pets also increases. "I don't know if families don't want the animal, but for whatever reason, they dump it," he said. "Deployment is definitely a factor. I guess a spouse with three kids and three dogs can be too much, so they think they can just get rid of the responsibility by getting rid of the dogs."

But that should not be the answer, he said. If nothing else, offers a place for Riley County residents to take their pet, where they have a 74-percent chance of being adopted. "People bring their pets here every time the military deploys," said Lynn Schumacher, animal shelter/control supervisor. "It's a constant problem, but our adoption rate is exceptional. We do our best to find a good home for the animals."



To help care for the animal until a home could hopefully be found, the shelter asks for a \$25 surrender donation, but no payment is required. Hansen said people should not feel guilty about taking a pet to a stray facility or an animal shelter, because it is a place where the animal has a good chance of being adopted into a good home. "I would feel more guilty just turning them loose, especially in the winter — with the elements," he said.

Pet care plans Careful planning must be done when families mobilize, because it is inhumane to leave a pet to fend for itself, either in the home or on the street, according to the Soldier and Family Support Center. — Contact Veterinary Services and the Stray Facility for adoption suggestions, 239-2732. — Ask a friend or relative to assume care of the pet. If a soldier ask someone to take care of a pet, the soldier should make certain the pet's shots are up-to-date and it has had a check-up with the veterinarian before someone "pet sits."

Also, do not forget to provide the pet carrier, favorite toys, food and blanket. Many pets are like children - they need their own things to adjust to changes.

Helmets to Hardhats looking for workers

Helmets to Hardhats Release

Looking for a career with great pay and benefits that puts a market value on your military skills? Want an active lifestyle that puts you in command of iron, stone, timber, energy and earth? If you have building and construction skills - or want to learn them - a new federally-funded program is waiting to hear from you. The not-for-profit program, "Helmets to Hardhats," opens a pipeline between military service and America's best building and construction industry jobs. Employers, contractors and trades use the service to find, among the nation's separating service members or Guard and Reserve forces, the mature, stable, drug free and dependable workers they need. There is no charge for either applicants or employers to use the program, which was funded through the 2003 DOD budget. "Transition is a stressful time for servicemembers and their families," says Marine Corps Maj. Gen. (ret.) Matt Caulfield, director of the web-based program. "If you've served our country, you've earned the right to a smooth transition into a great civilian job."

How does the program work? Helmets to Hardhats screens job opportunities, assesses candidates' military training and experience, locates job openings that are a good fit, and connects applicants with hiring managers. For more information, contact John J. Bednar, Central Regional Recruiter for Helmets to Hardhats, at the Fort Riley Army Career and Alumni Program Job Fair on March 21. It will be held in the ACAP Center classroom, room 7, building 210, Custer Avenue from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Candidates can also visit www.helmetstohardhats.org

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Health

DoD officials want no repeat of Gulf War health problems

By Doug Sample

American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department has changed the way it will track and assess the health care given to military personnel before, during and after deployments, a senior Pentagon health official said recently.

DoD's new strategy emphasizes health care surveillance of deployed personnel, said Dr. Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director, Deployment Health Support Directorate, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Protection and Readiness.

Officials, he said, want no repeat of 1991 Gulf War health care problems, referring to widespread instances reported by personnel returning home with incomplete and poorly maintained medical records and improperly monitored illnesses.

Kilpatrick said DoD is concerned with taking care of the health of its military personnel and their families. "To do that optimally, we need to provide preventive

care," he said. "And if a service member becomes ill or is injured, we need to provide treatment for them."

After a deployment, he added, personnel need to know the Department of Defense will provide them with care for any medical problem they may develop.

This Force Health Protection strategy is designed to help the department track service members' diseases and injuries and to provide them comprehensive follow-up treatment for deployment-related health conditions, he said.

Kilpatrick directs the DoD effort to protect the health of deployed service members. He noted there was no unique screening to deployment during the Gulf War. "If you were on active duty, you were generally assumed to be deployable," he said.

Now, he said, the Defense Department plans to see force health is closely monitored through a series of medical assessments before and after deployment and health concerns are documented and closely monitored.

Kilpatrick said the pre- and post-

deployment health assessment is a brief series of questions to see if troops are physically and psychologically prepared to deploy. The forms can be found on DoD's deployment Web site at www.deploymentlink.osd.mil.

"[The assessment is] an opportunity for them to bring up any medical conditions that occurred to them in the last several months or in the period since their last physical examination. It's a quick check to make sure they are ready to go," he said.

The health assessments are done on paper and checked by a physician "to see if there are any changes in service members' health or condition that may require attention before or after they deploy," Kilpatrick said. Later, the forms are sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where they are scanned electronically and retained for analysis.

The Defense Department has established three deployment health centers, one each for health surveillance, care and research. They focus on the prevention, treatment and understanding of deploy-

ment-related health concerns. Two centers are at Walter Reed; the third is at the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego.

The department will improve deployment-related medical record keeping through its Composite Health Care System II and the Theater Medical Information Program, which is still being tested.

Kilpatrick said the two systems collect immunization data electronically through a centralized data bank, along with computerized medical files currently being gathered on deployed military personnel from all the services in order to document deployment-related health problems.

Special Forces soldiers deployed to remote areas, he noted, can now use handheld computers to gather and store medical data on soldiers and then later transmit the data to rear operations.

Kilpatrick expects broader initiatives to protect deployed personnel and more research.

The plan includes improving health risk communication and medical intelligence; providing environmental risk

assessments to commanders on the battlefield; giving medical threat briefings; and distributing pocket-sized health guides to deployed personnel. Kilpatrick's office also has created deployment-focused Web sites, such as DeploymentLINK.

Additionally, the Defense Medical Surveillance System has created a database on diseases personnel may encounter in deployed areas. Another plan is to deploy preventive medicine and environmental surveillance teams to forward-deployed areas to evaluate health threats on the battlefield.

Another measure calls for improved biological and chemical warfare detection and alarm exploring next-generation vaccines and drugs, he said.

Kilpatrick said the new program shows how seriously DoD regards force health protection.

"We've learned a great deal from deployments over the past 12 years since the Gulf War and we intend to use those lessons to benefit those who serve today," Kilpatrick concluded.

Physical therapy aids soldiers, civilians recover from injuries

By Summer Alford

Staff Writer

When injuries or overused muscles begin to disrupt life, the physical therapy department at Irwin Army Community Hospital assists with recovery.

Pvt. Joe Delgado is currently recovering from ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) reconstruction surgery. "I had my surgery on Jan. 23 and I started post-operation electrotherapy a week later," he said. "The electrotherapy stimulates the muscles to contract again."

"I've been in a lot of pain," he added. "I am working to retrain my leg to use the new graft."

The therapists have been encouraging Delgado to stretch and bend in order to reuply the new tendons. "I have to push myself 70 percent and the therapists push me 30 percent."

"With their guidance, I can push myself but also prevent myself from over working the injury," said Delgado.

Maj. Timothy Pendergrass, chief, physical therapy department, IACH, said there are two locations for physical therapy care on post, one at IACH and the other is at the Combined Troop Medical Clinic during sick call hours. Their primary service is to evaluate musculoskeletal complaints / injuries, prescribe exercise and treatment plans and direct post-operative recovery.

"We commonly see training or sport-type injuries, such as ligament sprains and tears, tendon and muscle strains, and general overuse injuries," he said. "On any given day in our clinic, you will find patients that have suffered various injuries, from ACL tears and ankle sprains to shoulder instability and back pain."

During their first visit, patients will receive an evaluation, diagnosis and a therapeutic treatment plan that is designed specifically for their musculoskeletal complaint. After the prescribed treatment period, patients will have a follow-up evaluation with their therapist.

In addition to exercise and stretching programs, a physical therapy treatment period may use any number of modalities, such as ultrasound, electrical stimulation and traction, said Pendergrass. The goal of Army physical therapy is to return healthy soldiers to their unit as soon as possible.

Pendergrass added that the physical therapy department also teaches educational and exercise

classes for the patients. "We have classes for low back pain, knee pain and exercise prescription for weight management, which is provided in conjunction with nutrition programs," he said.

"We are currently working on a class geared toward the senior officer and NCO (noncommissioned officer) leadership within the Army community that addresses injury prevention," said Pendergrass. "This class will focus on preventing training injuries, as well as common injuries that result from physical training."

Most PT patients are referred from other medical providers, such as doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, said Pendergrass. "But we do also see some patients through direct access at the CTMC."

"Seventy-five percent of our patients are active duty, including a few Air Force," he said. "Another 17 percent of our patients are family members, with four percent being retired military, reserves and National Guard."

Pendergrass said he expects to see an increase in the number of reserves due to recent mobilizations. Part of the active duty patient population comes from the soldiers that we see at the CTMC during sick call, said Pendergrass. "We started CTMC coverage last year so we could see patients more acutely. This allows us to start treatment sooner and speed the soldiers on the road to recovery. The program continues to work well, and we have a great relationship with the doctor and physician assistant staff up on the hill."

There are currently four physical therapists, six physical therapy technicians and one medical clerk at IACH. "We also occasionally have a physical therapy tech student rotating with us for on-the-job training," he added.

The physical therapy department also has an interest in sports and physical training. They hope

to decrease the number of injuries that can occur in such activities. Being overzealous on a new activity or an activity you have not done in a while can cause an overuse injury, said Pendergrass.

Two important methods for decreasing the likelihood of injuries are warm-up and cool down. Warming up the body part(s) you plan to work on is essential, said Pendergrass.

In addition, a cool down stretch after exercise can help to remove lactic acid build up that can cause delayed onset muscle soreness. It is also important to remember to ease gradually into any new sport or activity, said Pendergrass.

"Unlike many other medical areas, our patients can be long-term," said Pendergrass. "Predominately, the post-operation patients will be involved in therapy for six to twelve months."

"We encourage all of our patients to stick with their therapy and to make follow-up meetings, even if they start to feel better," he said. Oftentimes, pain-free does not mean fully healed. It takes an average of six months for post-operation recovery, but the patients will not receive 90 to 100 percent improvement until after 12 months of therapy, added Pendergrass.

"With such long rehabilitation times, it is very important to develop a good relationship with our patients," he said.

Pfc. Tiffany Putz recently

injured her knee during active duty and has spent a month in physical therapy. "So far, the experience has been very good," she said. "The personnel is very knowledgeable and I am always questioning the therapists."

Putz said she will be in therapy for one more month. "Physical therapy has actually helped," she said. "I am allowed to do my PT test and to move on with my

career."

The therapists can also prescribe home exercise programs for patients that cannot come to the clinic. These programs often incorporate equipment found at the local fitness facility or exercises that can be done around the home.

"We try to give them ideas around the house to use," Pendergrass. "For example, rub-

ber tubing or a step can be used for strengthening and a pillow can be used for balance work. Even a basketball can be bounced against a wall to work on proprioception and coordination."

Delgado said that he has come a long way with the help of physical therapy. "The therapists are definitely a big encourager to patients," he said.

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Spring Break Packaging

It's not too early to start those Spring Break plans. Listed below are some destination packages that are available at military discounts.

Branson, Mo.

As one of the top vacation destinations in the country, and approximately six-hour drive from Fort Riley, Branson offers a wealth of diverse entertainment.

Whether your idea of entertainment is being dazzled, spending a day with your family at one of the attractions or finding a great deal at one of the area retailers, Branson is second to none in its scope of exciting activities. Let ITR put together a Spring Break package.

Destination California

Want to turn your visit to Southern California into the most fun-filled vacation ever? At Universal Studios Hollywood enjoy all the thrills, magic, stunts and special effects when you take part in your favorite blockbuster movies. It's all the glitz, glamour, action and entertainment of Hollywood, only at the world's largest movie studio and theme park. Experience Disney at Disneyland Resort. Meet memorable Disney characters, discover exclusive attractions and enjoy spectacular entertainment. Eight lands of fantasy and magic bring smiles to kids of all ages.

Florida Bound

Prepare to be awed, inspired, thrilled and enchanted at Walt

Disney World. This is, without a doubt, the most magical and incredible time in your life, visiting the world's vacation kingdom. Universal Orlando is two amazing parks; one a working movie studio where the movies come alive, the other an unforgettable journey through unique islands. Each park is filled with once in a lifetime adventures, plus non-stop nightlife that's all within easy walking distance of each other. It's an unbelievable universe of family fun and excitement in one incredible location.

Colorado Ski Packages

They've started out the New Year on the right foot with new snow at Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone and Winter Park! Now that the hustle and bustle of the holidays is over, it's time to plan a relaxing getaway to the mountains. Whether it's a day at the spa or a day on the slopes, you can be sure to find something at their resorts to help your body unwind. Military discounts available for Colorado lift tickets. Let ITR put together a ski package for you.

Snow Creek

If you ever wanted to try the sport of skiing or snowboarding, now is the time! Ski in historical Weston, Mo. located 15 minutes from KCI airport. Snow Creek has 100 percent snowmaking capabilities. Discount snow passes are available through ITR.

Local Spring Break ideas?

Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center is located in Hutchinson, and it is quickly becoming the most comprehensive space museum in the world. It is not what you would expect to find on the open prairies of Kansas, and that's the point exactly. From the jaw-dropping Hall of Space Museum and incredible IMAX Dome Theatre to the million-dollar multimedia Planetarium, the Cosmosphere is an all-day, all ages adventure. Hold on tight. You're going for lift-off!

How about Science City at the Union Station in Kansas City? Imagine a city like no other in the world. It is a thriving metropolis

that combines adventure, entertainment, discovery and excitement. With four different parts of town containing over 50 interactive environments, you'll find there's something for everyone. Discounts tickets are available through ITR.

Sleep to the Slopes

Sleep to the Slopes is the theme of ITRs most popular trip packages. Two, three, and four-day trips are offered most weekends throughout the ski season. The trip includes transportation on deluxe sleeper motor coach, hotel or condo lodging and lift tickets for each ski day. On the 40-passenger sleeper motor coach, two people face another two people with a table in-between creating a booth. There are 10 booths on the coach. The seats on this coach convert into bunk beds allowing passengers to lie down horizontally and catch some sleep while driving across Kansas at night. Wake up rested and ready to ski or snowboard the next morning. Call ITR for package prices.

Commercial Leisure Travel

ITR now assists you with leisure commercial travel. Make your plans early for better pricing and ticket availability.

A computer KIOSK is available at ITR for customer use in booking airline tickets through the Internet or call ITR for assistance in booking your commercial travel.

KCI Roadrunner

Kansas City International Airport shuttle provides door-to-door service. Military discounts are available. Make your reservations at ITR and commission will be paid back to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Fund.

Discount Movie Tickets

Passes may be used at Carmike Cinemas in Manhattan. Cost is \$5.50. This is a great savings for evening shows; a savings of up to \$2 per ticket.

St. Patrick's Day events planned for tomorrow

By Michael Watson
Staff writer

Thousands are expected to line the streets tomorrow for an Aggieville-style Irish celebration, complete with a parade and road races.

The St. Patrick's Day event will kick off with an 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. breakfast, where people can get their fill of green eggs and ham and other not-so-green breakfast items.

"This is a wonderful way to start the day, because people are so happy and jolly," Karen Seay, board member, Manhattan Arts

Center, said. "After breakfast, there are plenty of activities to do outside."

After eating breakfast and listening to Irish music, people can line the streets to watch the parade go down Moro Street at 11 a.m. and stay to run or walk in the road races.

Cheryl Sieben, executive director, Aggieville Business Association, said it is not too late to register for the 10K Road

Race, two mile Shamrock Run or three mile Leprechaun Walk.

The race headquarters will be set up at Ballard Sporting Goods, and many people are expected to sign up the morning of the race. The entry fees are \$20 for runners and \$15 for walkers.

"People don't like to sign up early, because they never know if they can count on the weather," she said. "But it is supposed to be

really nice Saturday, so we are expecting more runners than usual."

There are also more prizes, and that should also attract more runners, Sieben said. Past parade events brought 700 runners, but she said she expects more than 1,000 runners for this year's race.

There are also plenty of competitions for the parade, she said. There will be elementary school students decorating their bicycles for the Spoke and Shamrock event, and there will be a St. Patrick's Day Spirit Award, which could go to the greenest person in the parade - whatever judges feel is the most spirited, Sieben said.



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